

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1, 3, 10, and 12 are amended. Claims 1-12 are respectfully presented for reconsideration.

The Office Action objects to claim 3 for use of the phrase "for receiving a respective of the arms." Applicant has amended that language to "for receiving a respective one of the arms," which Applicant submits would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant thus requests withdrawal of the objection.

The Office Action states that the Information Disclosure Statement filed May 5, 2004 did not state that documents A4 and A5 were older than Applicant's filing date. Applicant has submitted a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement with this Reply that states, "These buckles [of documents A4 and A5] came to the attention of applicant's assignee at a date presently undetermined, but not later than the effective filing date of the present application." Documents A4 and A5 from the May 5, 2004 Information Disclosure Statement have been renumbered as documents B1 and B2 in the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement. Applicant requests that these documents be considered by the Examiner and be made of record in the present application and that an initialed copy of Form PTO/SB/08 be returned in accordance with MPEP §609.

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10, and 12 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by Anscher (USP 6,393,677).

Claim 1, as amended, recites a buckle assembly that includes "first and second shoulder strap fasteners having respective bottom coupling sections configured for coupling to respective of the top coupling sections to couple *fixedly* the first waist strap fastener to the first shoulder strap fastener and the second waist strap fastener to the second shoulder strap fastener." Both claims 10 and 12, as amended, recite a buckle assembly that includes "first and second shoulder strap fasteners, each having a waist strap fastener coupling section

configured for *fixedly* coupling to the shoulder strap coupling section of the respective waist strap fastener.” Anscher does not teach or suggest these claim limitations.

Anscher discloses snap hooks 30 for shoulder straps 31, and D-rings formed by ring portions 21 on waist strap buckle sections 12, 13 and ring portions 22 on center buckle section 11. When secured to the D-rings, the snap hooks 30 can move relative to the D-rings. The snap hooks 30 are not *fixedly* coupled to the D-rings.

For at least this reason, Applicant submits that claims 1, 10, and 12, and dependent claims 2-3 and 5-8, are not anticipated by Anscher under 35 USC §102(b).

Claims 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Anscher in view of Örje (USP 4,704,771). Assuming, for the sake of argument, that Örje provides the teaching stated in the Office Action and that there is appropriate motivation to combine, this alleged teaching of Örje nevertheless fails to remedy the deficiency of Anscher mentioned above in regard to independent claims 1 and 10. Because claims 9 and 11 ultimately depend from claims 1 and 10, respectively, and thus include the limitations of claims 1 and 10, respectively, at least that deficiency makes claims 9 and 11 patentable over Anscher and Örje.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Anscher in view of Lerra et al. (USP 6,226,844). Assuming, for the sake of argument, that Lerra et al. provides the teaching stated in the Office Action and that there is appropriate motivation to combine, this alleged teaching of Lerra et al. nevertheless fails to remedy the deficiency of Anscher mentioned above in regard to independent claim 1. Because claim 4 ultimately depends from claim 1, and thus includes the limitations of claim 1, at least that deficiency makes claim 4 patentable over Anscher and Lerra et al.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 CFR 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 CFR 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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